

Event 2

Participation: The event involved 95 citizens, including 61 participants from municipality of Škofja Loka, Slovenia, 2 participants from the Bashkia Kruje, Albania, 3 participants from Stadtgemeinde Judenburg, Austria, 5 participants from Stadt Bad Kötzting, Germany, 3 participants from Bundoran, Ireland, 4 participants from Mesto Sušice, Czech Republic, 4 participants from Municipality of Rokiškis, Lithuania, 4 participants from Kőszeg Város, Hungary, 3 participants from Orasul Siret, Romania, 6 participants from Vereniging Meerssen, Netherlands.

Location / Dates: The event took place in Škofja Loka (Slovenia), from 3/9/2020 to 5/9/2020

Short description:

The event in Škofja Loka focussed on solving the challenges of the quality aging of seniors through workshops and the exchange of experiences and good practices. The program was tailor-made for the needs of four target groups: officials, teachers, students and seniors.

Thursday, September 3rd:

The first day was dedicated to the arrival and accommodation of participants. The participants got to know the historical centre of Škofja Loka in a guided tour and a visit to the cultural exhibition opening. The day was concluded with a welcome dinner, which was an excellent opportunity for the introduction of traditional Slovenian cuisine, multicultural dialogue and bonding among participants.

Friday, September 4th:

On the second day the detailed program of all 5 future events with the keynote "Challenges of aging in European towns" was introduced to participants. After the plenary introduction 4 parallel workshops for each target group (officials, teachers, students, seniors) were implemented. All four workshops were structured around key elements:

- Presentation of participants
- The aging situation in each town (numbers and trends)
- Key challenges you face
- Some best practices in addressing aging in your town

At the **Seniors` workshop** which took place at Public University premises speakers presented the aging situation, the main challenges and the best practices in their towns together with the civil organizations dealing with elderly people. Participating cities sent their own materials and explained their view. These materials were presented and discussed in the workshop.

At the **Official's workshop** good practices in each municipal administration were highlighted such as the establishment of a senior council, a senior coordinator, intergenerational buildings etc. Apart from good practices other possible solutions were identified such as Multigenerational playgrounds in the communities. One part of the workshop was dedicated to the identification of problems in elderly homes in each municipality and to new ideas how to introduce new activities for seniors in the light of corona safety measures. The conclusion of the workshop was that many municipal administrators are facing the same problems and it

would be very beneficial for all towns involved if the official website of the town network Douzelage had its own section with projects and ideas so that other communities could refer to these best practice examples.

The Teachers' workshop dealt with the ageing situation, trends and local policies and practices in participating towns in the view of different target groups with the aim of getting familiar with different situations and challenges and existing practices in participating towns.

The facilitator invited all the participants to think over the following starting ice-breakers

1. Is it still true that only the elderly (in formal education the teachers) can teach the youth or has this relationship changed?
2. The importance of senior involvement in non-formal education
3. What have we learnt from the corona epidemic situation, especially when older teachers had to learn how to use modern devices to communicate with the young?

After a short exchange of opinions, the participants explained the situation in their local areas. In the continuation the following good practices were presented:

- projects that Gimnazija Škofja Loka carried out in the last few years dealing with the elderly
- the situation in Judenburg, Austria was presented, especially the way how the community communicates with the old peoples' homes in the area and the elderly (help given in shopping, commuting, volunteering...)
- the situation in the town Bad Kötzting, Germany was presented i.e. how they eliminated the obstacles on the streets in order to allow the elderly easier approach to offices and banks. Examples of cooperation with the elderly and the positive outcomes on non-formal education in everyday life were emphasized.
- a mixture of volunteering and non-formal education approach with the collaboration between the youth and the elderly in Kőszeg in Hungary was presented as a showcase example.
- a teacher from the University of Maribor, dr. Jože Gričar presented some of the examples from his own practice and pointed out the importance of collaboration between the youth and the elderly, especially through education (formal or non-formal).
- a Slovenian student presented her own practice through non-formal education with the elderly in the local area.

At the end of the discussion the facilitator also showed the presentations that other Douzelage cities (Sušice, Czech Republic, Bundoran, Ireland, Meerssen, The Netherlands) have prepared.

Key conclusions of the of the workshop were that in terms of education there is always a possibility of communication, collaboration or participation between seniors and juniors, either through formal (institutional) or non-formal education. In this relation it's a win-win situation for the seniors and the juniors, (visits to kindergarten, workshops in schools; these has always proved to be good practices of exchanging cultural heritage). Volunteering as a form of constant assistance has proved to be very helpful in many towns.

The **Students workshop** was focused on solving 2 key challenges and providing some fresh ideas in order to bridge the gap between the youth and the elderly.

Key challenge 1:

Seniors and Juniors are active, have a lot of different options – but not together with other generations. The main question is: How can we solve this situation?

Solution: Thanks to a lot of good ideas and best practice examples in our European partner cities, we focused on what every city can do. The main solution was in national and international volunteering of young people. The dynamics, obstacles and opportunities of volunteering were thoroughly discussed throughout the workshop. Also, the new European Union initiative for youth volunteering, the European Solidarity Corps programme was presented.

Key challenge 2:

Problem: Young people don't want to join – they have to realize they can gain something from the work with seniors. How can we bring juniors and seniors together without forcing someone to do it?

Solutions: Best-practice examples were presented such as (Photography Course, Computer Course, Common Living) and further ideas were identified such as sport activities and other hobbies.

After the workshops, the participants got familiarized with good practice examples by visiting the local intergenerational centre and the elderly home which was facilitated at the outside premises due to the coronavirus restrictions.

At the afternoon plenary sessions conclusions of each workshop were presented to all participants and also to the team members who weren't able to attend the event by means of live online streaming.

The last part of the agenda was dedicated to the introduction of the next event in Judenburg.

Saturday, September 5th:

The last day of the event was dedicated to the introduction of Slovenian cultural heritage by visiting the arts and crafts marketplace followed by the departure of participants.

Workshop: Officials

Participants: Jernej Tavcar (Skofja Loka), Wolfgang Kerscher (Bad Kötzting), Thorsten Wohleser (Judenburg)

The requirements for towns are currently under the sign of Corona and the associations are in an even more difficult situation of financing the projects. In the course of this workshop, projects of the communities in question were highlighted and discussed.

Relevant projects and ideas:

Senior Council: Pensioners have the opportunity to submit applications to the communities that have to be dealt with by the respective committees.

Elderly Homes: Rising costs, a lack of manpower and changes in the age structure pose major problems for the communities. The question arises what's better: state or private.

Senior Coordinator: There should be ONE contact person who should serve as a one-shop-stop for the retirees. These persons should bundle leisure activities, funding opportunities, support and so on.

Connection between old and young: One possibility of inter-generation is that elderly homes and kindergartens are housed in one building. This enables both old to learn from young and young from old.

Intergenerational Buildings: Apart from mandatory facilities greater attention should be paid to the question how to bring several generations (associations, institutions, leisure

facilities) into one environment.

Ideas in elderly homes: Due to Corona our towns have the same problems. To take away the loneliness of the residents, e.g. the following projects are implemented: secured visitor centers, therapy dogs, adapted animations.

Barrier-free community: A separate brochure with implemented projects on the subject of "barrier-free" was published, which also sets out the goals and projects for the coming years.

Active in the park: Multigenerational playgrounds in the communities

Other Ideas: Game evenings and increased cooperation with the senior clubs.

Conclusions:

It is important for communities to be familiar with the various types of funding. Depending on the administrative level, this turns out to be very different and complicated from country to country.

Many communities have the same problems; it would be an idea for the Douzelage website to get its own section with projects and ideas so that other communities could refer to these best practice examples.

Report prepared by Group manager Thorsten Wohleser

Workshop: Teachers

Juniors for Seniors - Active Ageing Report on Teachers' Workshop

Friday, September 4, 2020, 11.15 am – 12.45am, report at 4.30 pm, Škofja Loka Municipality

Topic: Ageing situation, trends and local policies and practices in participating towns in the view of different target groups

Aim: getting familiar with different situations and challenges and existing practices in participating towns

Facilitator: Jože Bogataj, prof.

Participants:

- Agatha Kertscher, Bad Koetzing; Germany ex teacher
- Katarina Hofke, Bad Koetzing, Germany, a student
- Ilona Berger, Judenburg, Austria, public sector
- Vera Nora Darabont, Koszeg, Hungary, a student
- Dr. Jože Gričar, Ljubljana, University of Maribor, a teacher
- Ema Nunar Škofja Loka, Slovenia, a student
- Ana Prevc Megušar, prof. Škofja Loka, Slovenia, a teacher

The facilitator invited all the participants to think over the following starting ice-breakers

1. Education has always (since pre-historic times) been understood as passing the knowledge/experience/skills from one (usually older) generation to another (usually younger). Let us think over the times and find out the existing practices in a modern society. Is it still

true that only the elderly (teacher in formal education) can teach the youth or has this relationship changed?

2. As teachers we know that everyday practice has proved that non-formal education is getting more and more important and that knowledge/skills/experiences may be gained in any situation, not only in classrooms. In this respect seniors may be of a great help when speaking of non-formal (i.e. non-institutional) education.

3. In March this year we had to lock down schools all over the world due to the corona virus and started to teach on line, using different gadgets and applications in order to communicate with our pupils and students. What have we learnt from the corona epidemic situation, especially when older teachers had to learn how to use modern devices to communicate with the young?

After a short exchange of opinions the participants explained the situation in their local areas where they came from.

Škofja Loka, Slovenia, Ana Prevc Megušar and Jože Bogataj (see power point presentation):

- Presenting a few projects that Gimnazija Škofja Loka carried out in the last few years dealing with the elderly: Symbioses projects were launched in 2011 and the young had the opportunity to teach the elderly how to use a computer (sending an e mail and browsing Google); later in 2016 the Symbioses project started to launch physical exercises to be performed in collaboration with the elderly, and recently this project has launched the idea how the young can teach the elderly to use tablets and smart phones.

- On the other side the elderly can be very informative when speaking of cultural heritage. Students from Škofja Loka Grammar school visited the old people's home in the town and recorded /filmed the elderly telling a poem or a song from their youth. In that way they presented the local heritage and later on some of the most precious examples were printed in a book.

- Gimnazija has ran a MEPI project (Duke of Edinburg Award) since 2004. Many students participate in the project and one of the four disciplines they have to do is to be a volunteer. That is why Škofja Loka Grammar school has a lot of volunteers and a lot of voluntary work has been done in the past year in the local society. (In the corona times this work has stopped.)

- During the national and international exchanges of students: a part of the programme has always been a workshop of modelling ginger bread. A local craftsman is invited to the school.

Judenburg, Austria, Ilona Berger reports (see the power point presentation)

- Ilona Berger presented the situation in Judenburg, especially the way how the community communicates with the old peoples' homes in the area and the elderly (help given in shopping, commuting, volunteering...)

Bad Kötzing, Germany Agatha Kertscher (see the power point presentation)

- She explained the present situation in the town i.e., how they eliminated the obstacles on the streets in order to allow the elderly easier approach to the offices, banks... Further on as a former teacher she told us some examples of cooperation with the elderly but finds the education system very rigid. That is why she believes in non-formal education.

Bad Kötzing, Germany Katarina Hofke

- Katarina pointed out the positive outcomes on non-formal education in everyday life.

Kőszeg, Hungary Vera Nora Darabont, a student (see power point presentation)

- She presented the situation in Kőszeg in Hungary. A mixture of volunteering and non-formal education approach with the collaboration between the youth and the elderly.

Ljubljana, University of Maribor, dr. Jože Gričar, a teacher

- As a respected lecturer he presented some of the examples from his own practise and pointed out the importance of collaboration between the youth and the elderly, especially through education (formal or non-formal). And that is the reason he would introduce a new title to the schools that participate and collaborate with the seniors, following the existing "Age-Friendly University" global network" to "Age Friendly Secondary School".

EmaNunar Škofja Loka, Slovenia, a student

- Ema Nunar presented her own practice through non-formal education with the elderly in the local area.

At the end of the discussion the facilitator also showed the presentations that other Douzelage cities had prepared:

Sušice, Czech Republic, Bundoran, Ireland, Meerssen, The Netherlands.

Outcomes of the workshop:

- Speaking of education, we agreed there is always a possibility of communication, collaboration or participation between seniors and juniors, either through formal (institutional) or non-formal education.

- In this relation both seniors and juniors are benefited – it is a win-win situation. (visits to kindergarten, workshops in schools: these have always proved to be a good practice of exchanging cultural heritage.)

- Volunteering as a form of constant assistance has proved to be very helpful in many towns.

- As Mr Gričar said: We're in the same boat. And we all need to help each other. We'll all survive.

Jože Bogataj, facilitator

Workshop: Students

Key challenge 1:

Seniors and juniors are active, have a lot of different options – but not together with other generations. The main question is: How can we solve this situation?

Thanks to a lot of good ideas and best practice examples in our European partner cities, we focussed on things every city can do.

Volunteering

A volunteer is a person who wants to help other people without force or payment. This does

not have to be a person from another country. Because of our European project, we want to combine the idea of getting in contact with other Europeans and the idea of "Juniors for Seniors". And that is why we'll focus on examples with volunteers from other European countries in the following examples.

The main goal of international volunteers is to get in contact with people from other countries, learn new perspectives and get inspirations for their own life in the future. Most of the time people volunteer in other countries after High School or during a semester at University.

People who want to volunteer must choose between a lot of different styles of volunteering. We discussed with young people in Škofja Loka who are working with children in Slovenia for one year as volunteers from other European countries. They said that they know people who are working together with seniors in other countries. But no one knows anyone who is working with seniors and juniors

Our solution to solve the problem is:

Why not combining working with children and seniors? With new programs and ideas, volunteers could have a positive impact on living together in every city. Especially people from other countries could have a new and positive impact on the people in the country where they start their voluntary work because of their native country and projects people do there. They also have the perspective of an outside person and could see where the real problems are (organization, potential etc.).

Thanks to this viewpoint and the function of a volunteer, these people could start new programs, realize new ideas and organize events where juniors work together with seniors.

Volunteering as a chance

To realize our solution, the municipality, schools, and clubs have to advertise the advantages of being a volunteer.

Therefore we pointed out the main benefits to start a volunteer year in another European (partner-) city:

- Good for yourself
 - lots of impressions
 - you learn a lot from others
 - get in contact with new people
 - learn how to live in an area you don't know
 - learn a new language
 - learning a new culture means opening your horizon
 - learn what the European idea is about
- Good for Curriculum Vitae
- Gaining important working experience

Problems to solve:

The main problem which can occur is that it can be hard to find people with a certain level of 'professional' knowledge in some situations. Which means that working together with children or seniors with special constraints (for example very old seniors with illnesses) needs volunteers with special qualifications.

At least, people from other European countries should speak English and should be willing to learn the language where they live and work.

Key challenge 2:

Problem: Young people don't want to join – they have to realize they can gain something from the work with seniors.

How can we bring juniors and seniors together without forcing anyone to do it?

A connection can be made through common interests or hobbies!

It is important to make both sides see the point: Learning from each other!

Best-practice examples:

- Photography Course
- Computer Course
- Common Living

Further ideas:

- Sport activities
- All possible hobbies (theatre, playing instruments)

Sometimes it is hard to bring people together because of our way of thinking (“this is something for young people – what should I do there?”)

Idea: Go with juniors to a place where seniors are!

For example: Bowling.

Another best practice example: <https://lowvelder.co.za/608958/ball-steel-fun-appeal/>

Report prepared by Group manager Julian Preidl

Workshop: Seniors

The Seniors` workshop took place on Public University premises.

Due to the COVID-19 situation not all the participants from Europe were able to be present at this event.

18 participants participated in the workshop. Participants were from the project team and guests from associations from Škofja Loka.

Speakers presented the aging situation, the main challenges and the best practices in their towns together with the civil organizations which deal with elder people.

Participating cities sent their own materials and described their view. We presented and discussed these materials at the workshop.

In the afternoon plenary session we discussed some topics with remotely connected team members.

Seniors` workshop findings

Current situation:

- Age structure: seniors' population is between 16% and 33%
- Share of old people over 65 years in the total population is increasing
- Different services and care for elderly people are led by the government (public organizations) and civil organizations
- Many projects for elderly people are currently running and many are already finished successfully
- Cities and organizations expected more funding
- Costs for care and services are constantly rising
- Lack of appropriate housing for elder people
- Too many seniors are not included in any service/care
- Technology has an influence on seniors' life
- Juniors are not included sufficiently in caring for the elderly
- Effects of COVID-19 epidemic on the elderly population

Key challenges:

- To improve the lifestyle of elderly people
- Offer new programmes oriented to elderly people
- Well organized institutional care and voluntary work
- To promote inclusion of more seniors into offered programmes
- Proper share between public and civil institutions
- Linking public and civil institutions and social enterprises
- More old people`s homes, sheltered housing, and day-care centres
- Grant more living communities and popularize them
- A support to elderly people to stay at home longer
- Building a common community intergenerational living space
- Inclusion of more seniors in service/care, omit discrimination on the grounds of age
- Support elderly people in using new technologies
- Adequate funding for programs, more money is needed; funds should be shared between state and civil organizations
- Make better possibilities against COVID-19

Best practices:

- Successful projects and services: town without barriers, pedestrian and cycling paths, transportation projects, get-together events, learning & knowledge transfer to seniors, library and reading for seniors, charity, sporting & recreation, creative workshops, student and children visiting seniors ...
- Various solutions for elderly people's housing (own homes, elderly homes, retirement homes, care farms, meal delivery ...)
- WMO - responsibilities in the area of care and welfare are devoted from the Central Government to the municipalities [Meerssen, NL]
- Youngsters are obliged to serve in civil institutions before they graduate [Hungary]

Report prepared by Group Manager Igor Medič